Literary Terms Definitions

1. Theme – the overall message or lesson of a text.
2. Plot – The arrangement or interrelation of events.
3. Conflict – The struggle or tension that develops for the protagonist.
4. Symbolism – Something (usually a tangible object) that stands for or suggests something larger or more complex.
5. Metaphor – An indirect comparison between two distinct things without using connective words like “like” or “as”.
6. Simile – A comparison using “like” or “as”.
7. Tone – The author’s attitude toward a subject in a text.
8. Mood – When an author evokes an emotional response from the reader.
9. Allusion – An indirect reference to a well-known or real-life person, place, or thing.
10. Irony – A contradiction or incongruity between appearance or expectation and reality: dramatic irony, verbal irony, and situational irony.
11. Inference – A conclusion based on clues from the text; “reading between the lines”.
12. Narrator – A speaker through whom an author presents a narrative.
13. Dynamic Character – A character who undergoes a significant inner or emotional change by the end of the story.
14. Round Character – A three-dimensional character; one for which readers can identify more than three meaningful personality traits and support them with textual evidence.
15. Static Character – A character who undergoes little to no change by the end of the story.
16. Flat Character – A two-dimensional character who only has one or two key personality traits.
17. Stock Character: A character who clearly fits preconceived notions about a “type”; a stereotype.
18. Exposition: all introductory material that introduces characters, setting, and conflicts.
19. Rising Action: a series of events that deepen the conflict and build up to the climax.
20. Climax: the highest point of emotional intensity in a story.
21. Falling Action: elements in the conflict begin to be resolved.
22. Resolution: the conflict is resolved completely or left unanswered for the main characters and the reader.
23. 6 Types of Conflict:
    1. Character vs. Character
    2. Character vs. Nature
    3. Character vs. God/Fate
    4. Character vs. Society
    5. Character vs. Self
    6. Character vs. Technology/Machine